Import of Milk Powder

2338. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government decided to import 10,000 M. Tons of powder milk at zero import duty;

(b) whether the Indian Dairy Association, the largest milk producing organisation in the country has protested against such a move;

(c) whether such a move will not jeopardise the near self-sufficient status of India in milk production and render the Operation Flood meaningless; and

(d) whether Bangladesh and other developing countries are still continuing with a high level of import duty and India will be put at disadvantage because of such move;

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) The tariff rate of duty on milk powder is bound at Nil and therefore, the import of milk powder does not attract any custom duty, irrespective of the quantity of imports.

(b) and (c) The Indian Dairy Association had submitted that the zero import duty on some of the milk products needs to be reviewed so that the growth prospect of the Indian dairy sector are not jeopardised.

(d) Bangladesh presently levies import duty of 62% on milk powder. The Government is in the process of negotiations with the concerned trading partners for enhancement of tariff binding on milk powder.

Co-operative project in NE States

2339. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any new cooperative project which are to be introduced in the States by NCDC;

(b) whether the NCDC's ICDP projects are not taken up for further opening in the North-East States where Cooperative movement is least developed;

(c) why the NCDC's ICDP projects which were approved earlier to open in two hill districts and one valley district of Manipur are not opened till now; and

(d) if so, the reasons for delay in opening them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) NCDC provides financial assistance for the Cooperative projects formulated and recommended by State Governments under NCDC schemes. NCDC does not introduce projects on its own in the States.

(b) The North-East States are given top priority by NCDC for sanctioning Integrated Cooperative Development Projects (ICDP), and all the 28 projects recommended by the North-East States have been approved.

(c) and (d) NCDC has already approved three more districts, namely Imphal (Valley) Ukhrul and Senapati (Hill districts) for implementation of ICDP. However, detailed project reports of these districts are awaited from the State Government for commencement of the project.

Linkage between Agricultural Universities/Research Institutes and farmers

2340. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the technology and expertise gained by Agricultural Universities/Research Institutes do not reach the farmers in the absence of direct linkages between them; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken/propose to take in this behalf;